



4083 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511
859-259-2742 | Fax: 859-259-1628

AMERICAN SADDLEBRED HORSE & BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

Member Code of Conduct

The American Saddlebred Horse & Breeders Association (the “Association”) is a membership corporation dedicated to safeguarding the integrity and improvement of the American Saddlebred breed, promoting the humane treatment of American Saddlebred horses, and encouraging safe practices, ethical dealings, and fair treatment in connection with horse and rider exhibition, business matters, and other activities for the horses, members, and other participants. The Board of Directors has adopted this Member Code of Conduct in furtherance of these principles and to set the standards for the ethical conduct of its members.

This Code of Conduct shall be in effect upon adoption by the Board of Directors and publication to the membership on the Association’s website www.asha.net. All members are expected at all times to conduct themselves and their activities in accordance with the Code of Conduct, including the obligations to report suspected violations and comply with any enforcement actions. Upon the request of the Association, members shall acknowledge in writing that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Member Code of Conduct.

Ethical Considerations

1. *Animal Welfare.* The welfare of American Saddlebred horses is the foremost consideration of the Association and its members. We believe that every American Saddlebred horse should be treated humanely, free from abuse and neglect.
2. *Legal and Regulatory Compliance.* Members are expected to comply with all applicable Federal and state laws, statutes, rules and regulations, the rules and regulations of the Association, the rules and regulations of all affiliate governing bodies, and the rules and regulations of all competitions and exhibitions and are also expected to use good faith efforts to cause others within their control (e.g., employees, agents, representatives, immediate family members) to comply.



4083 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511
859-259-2742 | Fax: 859-259-1628

3. *Equal Opportunity.* The Association is an equal opportunity employer and membership is open to all individuals on a non-discriminatory basis. Members are encouraged to adopt similar policies in their employment and business dealings.
4. *SafeSport.* The Association and its members seek to protect the safety, dignity, and autonomy of all participants, especially those most vulnerable to abuse or undue influence.
5. *Breed Promotion.* The Association and its members seek to protect the integrity of the breed and promote its development and expansion as the breed of choice of show, sport, and pleasure horse owners.
6. *Sportsmanship.* Members strive to always exhibit sportsmanlike behavior.
7. *Fair Business Dealings.* Members seek to ensure that business dealings involving American Saddlebred horses are conducted in an honest and transparent manner. Members fully disclose any conflicts of interest and all relevant facts in their business dealings.
8. *Judging Standards and Impartiality.* Members recognize that the evaluation and judging of American Saddlebred horses is subjective, however, it is in the best interests of the breed that judging be understandable and as impartial as possible. Accordingly, judges of USEF-recognized and Association-affiliated competitions strive to adhere to recognized judging standards for American Saddlebred horses and to avoid conflicts of interest in accepting assignments and performing their duties as judges.
9. *Other Considerations.* This list of ethical considerations is not exclusive and is not meant to condone other behaviors that would be considered unethical by the standards of society and the horse industry. In addition, efforts to circumvent the stated ethical considerations are themselves in violation of the Member Code of Conduct and subject to investigation and discipline.
10. *Reporting and Non-retaliation.* Members are expected to report concerns of violations of the Member Code of Conduct or other concerns of unethical behavior, without fear of retaliation. The Confidential Complaint Form attached to the Member Code of Conduct as Exhibit A may be used to report concerns of violations.



4083 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511
859-259-2742 | Fax: 859-259-1628

11. *Investigation of Complaints and Fair Resolution Process.* The Association takes complaints of violations of the Member Code of Conduct very seriously and will investigate all alleged violations. Except in reciprocal instances requiring automatic suspension, members will be afforded a fair and timely process to defend any allegations prior to the imposition of sanctions involving the loss of membership privileges, suspension, or revocation of membership.
12. *Disciplinary Sanctions.* Members found to have violated the Member Code of Conduct will be subject to discipline.

Investigation of Complaints and Fair Resolution Process.

Rules and Procedures for Review

1. *Application of the Code of Conduct.*

(a) All members of the Association agree to and shall be bound by this Code of Conduct during their membership in the Association.

(b) Alleged infractions of the Association's Code of Conduct, as adopted or amended, may be brought by members to the attention of the Board of Directors by submitting the complaint and supporting documentation to the Association's Executive Director.

(c) The function of the Conduct Review Committee shall be to interpret and enforce the Association's Code of Conduct in matters brought before it for consideration.

(d) If a member of the Conduct Review Committee or Board of Directors has a business or personal conflict of interest with any of the parties to the complaint being reviewed, they must recuse themselves or they may be recused by a majority vote of the Conduct Review Committee or the Board of Directors, as applicable.

(e) These rules and procedures govern the Association in bringing the resolution of all complaints of violation of the Code of Conduct.

2. *Conduct Review Committee (CRC).*

(a) The function of the Conduct Review Committee (CRC) shall be to review all complaints of alleged violations of the Association Code of Conduct properly filed with the Association and to make a determination as to whether or not there are reasonable grounds to believe an infraction of the



4083 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511
859-259-2742 | Fax: 859-259-1628

Association Code of Conduct exists and whether the alleged infraction, if proved, is of sufficient importance to Association that it should go before the Board of Directors for review and imposition of sanctions.

(b) The CRC shall be an *ad hoc* committee of the Board of Directors and shall consist of five (5) members, appointed by the President of the Board of Directors and whose appointment shall be ratified by the Board of Directors. All members of the CRC shall be members of the Association for the duration of their term of office.

(c) No more than two members of the CRC may be members of the Board of Directors.

(d) The term of each member of the CRC shall be three (3) years; with no more than two seats expiring at once. A CRC member may only serve for two (2) consecutive terms; a prior member of the CRC may be reappointed to the CRC after a minimum one (1) year break in service. Beginning in 2019, two seats shall serve a term of three (3) years, two seats shall serve a term of two (2) years, and one seat shall serve a term of one (1) year.

(e) Should a vacancy on the CRC occur before the expiration of a term (including without limitation, the resignation of a member of the CRC who becomes a member of the Board of Directors or a member of the CRC who ceases to be a member in good standing of the Association), the vacancy will be filled by the same process set out in paragraph (b) above.

(f) A quorum consisting of at least three (3) members of the CRC shall be required to convene a meeting. If a quorum cannot be convened because of conflicts of interest with any of the parties to the complaint being reviewed, the President of the Board of Directors shall appoint temporary replacement members necessary to achieve a quorum to review the complaint. Meetings of the CRC may be held via audio or video conference call, webcast, or other means by which the participants can hear and speak to each other.

3. *Jurisdiction.*

(a) The CRC shall have the authority to hear all complaints of violation of the Code of Conduct, including but not limited to complaints of misconduct of Association members and other persons who come under the jurisdiction of Association.



4083 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511
859-259-2742 | Fax: 859-259-1628

(b) Failure to renew Association membership or resignation of Association membership shall not be grounds for automatic dismissal or avoidance of a complaint.

(c) The Association shall not, unless there are exceptional circumstances, hear any complaints which involve the following:

(i) Private and/or contractual disputes between two or more persons that should properly be settled by a court of law or equity;

(ii) Rule infractions at competitions or other equine events where formal protest procedures are available as a means of filing violations of misconduct but have not been used;

(iii) Disputes which have been submitted to a court of law (or equity) or to an arbitration proceeding in which a court or arbitrator has made a final, non-appealable determination of facts in such a way that no violation would have occurred; or

(iv) Complaints brought by individuals who are not members in good standing of the Association.

(d) In the event a complaint has been filed with the Association involving a matter in which (i) a formal protest has been filed with USEF, (ii) the Center for SafeSport has jurisdiction, or (iii) it becomes the subject of litigation or arbitration, the Association shall stay all proceedings in that matter pending the final outcome of the protest procedure, litigation or arbitration. For purposes of any proceeding under these rules, the Association shall accept any final factual determination made by the protest-hearing body, court of law or arbitrator.

4. Initiation of Complaints

(a) Complaints shall be brought to the attention of the CRC by submitting a written notice of complaint and any supporting documentation to the Association Executive Director.

(b) A person shall be a member of the Association to initiate a complaint. A person who has previously been a member of the Association but is not in good standing due to the failure to pay dues must first reinstate their Association membership. Individuals who have been expelled from membership may not initiate complaints.

5. Contents of Complaint – Exhibit A



4083 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511
859-259-2742 | Fax: 859-259-1628

- (a) The complaint must contain the full name and address of the person or persons in possible violation and describe their relationship to the Association.
- (b) The complaint must describe the particular facts and events and the location and date of the alleged infractions that the complaining party believes constitute violation of the Code of Conduct.
- (c) The burden of proving all alleged violations of the Code of Conduct is on the individual submitting the complaint.
- (d) The complaint must state the specific section(s) of the Code of Conduct alleged to have been violated.
- (e) The complaint shall name all witnesses to the actions if their names are known by the complainant.
- (f) The complaint must include supporting documentation then in the possession of the complainant.
- (g) The complaint must be signed by the complainant and include the complainant's address, phone number, and other contact information.
- (h) The complaint must include a statement whether, to the best of the complainant's knowledge, the conduct that is the basis of the complaint has been or will be the basis for claims in any court of law, arbitration, or mediation or the basis of a protest or violations filed with another governing body.
- (i) The complaint must be sworn before a notary public.

6. Processing of Complaints

a. The Association's Executive Director or other person appointed by the President of the Board of Directors shall review all complaints to verify that the complaint information is complete and complies with the preceding sections. If a complaint is incomplete in any material respect, the complainant will be notified and given ten (10) days to submit additional information and/or documentation. If requested information is not received by the deadline, the complaint will not be reviewed.

7. Contacts with Parties



4083 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511
859-259-2742 | Fax: 859-259-1628

(a) No member of the CRC or Board of Directors shall hear, participate in, or vote on any matter in which they are personally involved, about which they have personal and firsthand knowledge, or involving individuals or entities with whom they have had a close business or personal relationship during the year prior to the proceedings.

(b) No person shall attempt to influence the actions of the CRC or the Board of Directors by duress or intimidation of any sort.

(c) No person shall communicate or cause or initiate any communication with any member of the CRC or the Board of Directors concerning the substance of a complaint until after the decision is rendered.

(d) No person shall attempt to influence a member of the CRC or the Board of Directors with respect to any complaint except through oral or written presentations presented to the entire group in accordance with the Rules and Procedures for the Review.

8. Review of Complaints-CRC

(a) In the review process, there is a presumption of innocence regarding the alleged violation. The burden of proof is on the complainant.

(b) The CRC shall review submitted complaints to determine:

(i) Whether the violations are within the jurisdiction of the Code.

(ii) If there appears to be sufficient grounds for review.

(iii) The specific section or sections of the code which may have been violated by the alleged party.

(iv) The determination of whether there is jurisdiction, whether there are sufficient grounds for a review, and which specific Code of Conduct sections may have been violated shall be by majority vote of the CRC. The CRC may confer with the Association's legal counsel in making these determinations.

(c) If the CRC determines there are sufficient grounds for review, the Association members involved in the complaint will be notified of the determination and requested to submit a written response to the complaint within thirty (30) days from the date the notice is given.



4083 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511
859-259-2742 | Fax: 859-259-1628

(d) The CRC shall weigh the evidence before the CRC (and shall have the right and ability to conduct additional investigations and gather additional evidence) and determine (by majority vote) whether the alleged violation occurred. If the CRC finds that a violation has occurred, it shall also determine a recommended sanction. In making its findings, the CRC shall consider whether the offense was intentional and whether it continued after prior disciplinary action.

(e) The documentation, written findings, and recommended sanction (if applicable) shall be forwarded to the Board of Directors for a final determination.

9. Final Board of Directors' Decision

(a) The Board of Directors shall consider the findings and recommendations of the CRC, but are not bound by its determinations. As with the CRC, the Board of Directors shall consider whether an offense was intentional and whether it continued after prior disciplinary action.

(b) In deciding upon a remedy for Code of Conduct violations, it shall be the general policy of the Association to be constructive with those who have committed unethical or unsportsmanlike acts, and to prevent their recurrence.

(c) Nothing in the foregoing, however, shall be construed to prohibit the strongest sanctions available against those persons found guilty of committing unethical acts or unsportsmanlike conduct.

(d) The Member found to have violated the Code of Conduct will be notified promptly of the finding and the sanction imposed. The determination of the Board of Directors is final and nonappealable.

Disciplinary Sanctions.

Violations of the Member Code of Conduct are subject to the following disciplinary actions:

1. Private censure/reprimand.
2. Public censure/reprimand.
3. Denial of all or part of Association privileges, including attendance at Association events, membership and/or participation in Association governance and committees, and serving as a representative of the Association.
4. Removal/forfeiture of awards and other name recognition from items associated with Association membership in good standing.



4083 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511
859-259-2742 | Fax: 859-259-1628

5. Suspension of Association membership.
6. Expulsion from Association membership.

Approved and adopted by the Board of Directors of the Association on July 12, 2019.